

Message Text

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C O N F I D E N T I A L MOSCOW 9122

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TAGS: SHUM, CSCE, PINT, EEWT, UR, US
SUBJECT: EMBASSY COMMENT ON HUMAN RIGHTS COUNTRY ACTION PLAN FOR
THE USSR

REF: STATE 139375

1. HERewith EMBASSY COMMENTS ON THE COUNTRY ACTION PLAN
FOR THE USSR. COMMENTS ARE KEYED TO THE PARAS IN REFTel.
IN PARA 3 "RECOMMENDATIONS", SUB PARA 1, WE THINK IT
WOULD BE USEFUL WHENEVER POSSIBLE TO CONCENTRATE ON THOSE
CASES WHERE THERE IS SOME SORT OF DIRECT U.S. INTEREST.
THE SOVIETS FIND IT MORE DIFFICULT TO DENY OUR STANDING
TO INTERVENE IN CASES WHEN THERE IS EVEN A TENUOUS AMERI-
CAN INVOLVEMENT THAN WHEN THERE IS NONE AT ALL.

2. IN SUB PARA 5 WHEN GIVING SOVIETS CREDIT, WE MUST BE
CAREFUL TO AVOID ANY HINT OF CONDESCENSION OR ADOPT A
PATRONIZING TONE SINCE THIS WILL ONLY HAVE THE OPPOSITE
EFFECT FROM THAT INTENDED.

3. IN SUB PARA 6, WE THINK IT IMPORTANT TO SAY
SPECIFICALLY TO THE SOVIETS THAT OUR CRITICISMS OF
THEIR FAILURES TO PROVIDE ADEQUATE HUMAN RIGHTS MUST
BE SEEN IN THE CONTEXT OF A DEEPLY-HELD, GLOBAL
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CONCERN. THE SOVIETS WILL NEVER BE COMFORTABLE
WITH AMERICAN CRITICISM OF THEIR HUMAN RIGHTS
DEFICIENCIES BUT THEY WILL AT LEAST PRIVATELY BE
PREPARED TO CONSIDER THEM MORE SERIOUSLY IF THEY
CAN BE MADE TO UNDERSTAND THE NON-DISCRIMINATORY
CHARACTER OF U.S. CONCERN WITH HUMAN RIGHTS.

4. IN SUB PARA 8, WE THINK IT MIGHT BE USEFUL TO MENTION SPECIFICALLY THE ACTIVITIES OF THE EUROPEAN NEUTRAL COUNTRIES WHICH HAVE DISPLAYED A GREAT DEAL OF CONCERN IN CONNECTION WITH SOVIET AND EASTERN EUROPEAN HUMAN RIGHTS VIOLATIONS AND HAVE TAKEN ACTION IN SOME CASES. THESE ACTIVITIES SHOULD BE ENCOURAGED.

5. IN SUB PARA 9, WE ENDORSE THIS OBJECTIVE BECAUSE MANY OF THE ITEMS CITED ARE BY THEMSELVES IN OUR OWN NATIONAL INTEREST AND COULD HELP, TO DEVELOP A BETTER CLIMATE FOR OBSERVANCE OF HUMAN RIGHTS IN THE USSR. IT SHOULD BE BORNE IN MIND, HOWEVER, THAT LEGISLATIVE RESTRICTIONS ON TRADE TIED SPECIFICALLY TO THE EMIGRATION ISSUE, BY MAKING THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN HUMAN RIGHTS AND TRADE SO EXPLICIT AND RIGID, MAY PROVE COUNTERPRODUCTIVE SINCE IT MAKES IT DIFFICULT TO DEVELOP THIS TRACK OF OUR POLICY, USING TRADE DISCREETLY TO PROMOTE BROADER NATIONAL INTERESTS.

6. REGARDING SUB PARA 11, WE SHOULD BE CAREFUL NOT TO ADOPT THE SOVIET VOCABULARY IN OUR STATEMENTS ON HUMAN RIGHTS, SINCE SOVIET DEFINITIONS ARE OFTEN VERY DIFFERENT FROM OURS. FOR EXAMPLE, WE SHOULD BE CAREFUL TO MAKE A CLEAR DISTINCTION BETWEEN THE SOVIET

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AND WESTERN DEFINITIONS OF "RIGHTS." MANY OF THE SOVIET "RIGHTS" SUCH AS THE RIGHT TO WORK, TO HOUSING, TO MEDICAL CARE, ARE NOT RIGHTS IN THE WESTERN SENSE. MOREOVER, THE SOVIETS ARE FAR LESS SUCCESSFUL IN FULFILLING THESE RIGHTS THAN THEIR PROPAGANDA SUGGESTS. IN ADDITION, IT MIGHT BE USEFUL FOR OUR OWN INFORMATION PROGRAMMING (E.G., THE VOA) TO GIVE A PROMINENT PLACE TO CONDITIONS IN THE USA, FOR EXAMPLE, THE HIGH QUALITY MEDICAL CARE AVAILABLE TO LOW INCOME GROUPS THROUGH HEALTH INSURANCE, OUR WELFARE SERVICES, ETC.

7. THE DEPARTMENT MAY WISH TO CONSIDER AS AN ADDITIONAL RECOMMENDATION CONCERNING HOW WE TREAT OUR OWN DEFICIENCIES IN THE FIELD OF HUMAN RIGHTS. WE SHOULD FRANKLY ACKNOWLEDGE OUR SHORTCOMINGS AS WELL AS THE STEPS WE ARE TAKING TO DEAL WITH THEM. WE THINK IT WOULD BE USEFUL IN MAKING THE POINT THAT OUR CONCERN OVER HUMAN RIGHTS IS TRULY GLOBAL IN SCOPE BY REFERRING TO CONDITIONS IN THE UNITED STATES AS WELL. IT MIGHT BE USEFUL TO INCLUDE ASSESSMENTS OF OUR OWN PERFORMANCE IN REPORTS SUCH

AS THOSE OF THE CSCE COMMISSION. WHILE WE DOUBT
THAT ANYTHING COULD MAKE THE CSCE COMMISSION
PALATABLE TO THE SOVIETS, OUR CRITICISM OF THE
SOVIET PERFORMANCE WOULD BE MORE EFFECTIVE IF THE
COMMISSION'S REPORTS INCLUDED SECTIONS ON U.S.
SHORTCOMINGS (FOR EXAMPLE, TRADE UNION VISAS,
212(A)(28) OF THE IMMIGRATION AND NATIONALITY
ACT, ETC.)

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